

A SIMPLE DEVICE FOR HOLDING LIGATURES.

By MAURICE RUBEL, M.D.,

OF BALTIMORE,

HOUSE OFFICER, JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL.

It must have occurred to every one doing surgical work that the ordinary method of keeping the ends of ligatures separated with artery clamps is anything but ideal. I refer especially to the closure of abdominal incisions with interrupted stitches.

In bringing the edges of the wound together with interrupted stitches, it is often customary to place the ligatures one after another, an assistant clamping the two ends of each ligature together with a pair of artery forceps. After all the sutures are set, the clamps must be removed one at a time, so that the ligatures can be tied. The operator may now see fit to cut away the superfluous amount of suture material, or he may prefer to have it again clamped so that all the sutures may be cut at the same time after they are all tied.

If the incision be a long one, many clamps are required, and they are very likely to become entangled, so that much time is lost in separating them. Furthermore, it consumes some little time to open and close the clamp for each ligature separately.

The simple instrument which is here pictured has, I believe, several advantages. It keeps the ends of each ligature together, and yet separate from the other sutures; it retains the sutures in their proper order, so that after they are set in the tissues and placed in the segregator (as the instrument might well be called) they can be picked up in order one at a time, tied, and the ends placed back again in the instrument. This does away with the use of many clamps, which are always getting in the way; it enables one to pick up and tie any one of the ligatures at any time, a thing which cannot be done without delay when clamps are used, as they are very likely to become entangled; and lastly, if

necessary, the assistant can be dispensed with during the entire closure of the wound.

The device, as can readily be seen, consists of a flat steel bar on which a tempered wire bent to form a row of V-shaped grooves about one-half an inch apart has been soldered. At either end of the bar there is a safety-pin to fasten the instrument to the dressings. The segregator is pinned to the dressings about ten centimetres from the wound and parallel to it. It is, of course, made entirely of steel, so that it can be sterilized without being injured.